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ABSTRACT

Participation in decision-making by subordinates in an organization is frequently cited in the literature on organizational change. The exact nature and extent of the participation-change relationship, however, is a topic of some disagreement among reviewers and researchers in the education field. This paper presents an analysis of six major reviewers' seemingly contradictory interpretations of the participation-change relationship. It includes an indepth investigation of their literature bases, together with an explication of the methodological and theoretical frameworks that guided the research. The analysis provides an example of the complex issues that arise when the emphasis of research becomes one of proof or disproof rather than the integration of ideological positions into an overall conception of a social phenomenon. The paper concludes with some implications of this dilemma for future participation-change research. (Author/LD)

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Theoretical Paper No. 75

CHANGE AND PARTICIPATION:
A REVIEW AND CRITIQUE OF SELECTED LITERATURE

by

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Report from the Project on
Studies of Implementation of Individualized Schooling

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Abstract

Subordinate decisional participation is a frequently cited and potentially key factor in the organizational change process. The exact nature and extent of the participation-change relationship, however, is a topic of some disagreement among reviewers and researchers in the education field. This paper presents an analysis of six major reviewers' seemingly contradictory interpretations of the participation-change relationship. It includes an in-depth investigation of their literature bases, together with an explication of the methodological and theoretical frameworks which guided the research cited. The analysis provides an example of the complex issues which arise when the emphasis of research becomes one of proof or disproof rather than the integration of ideological positions into an overall conception of a social phenomenon. The paper concludes with some implications of this dilemma for future participation-change research.

> And it ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things. The innovator has for enemies all those who have done well under the old conditions, and lukewarm defenders in those who may do well under the new. This coolness arises partly from fear of the opponents, who have the laws on their side, and partly from the incredulity of men, who do not readily believe in new things until they have had a long experience of them. (Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, 1513)

Machiavelli attributed the difficulty in introducing a "new order of things" to fear of the opponents and human incredulity. Today's researchers relate many other factors to the phenomenon of change, but educational change literature of the past several decades still reminds us of Machiavelli's 16th century remark on the difficulty and uncertainty of the change process. In exploring this ambiguity, we find that the change literature has developed rapidly in recent decades and is characterized by a variety of publication sources and research traditions. Emanating from a wide number of disciplines both within and outside education the research covers

a range of topics. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that reviews of the change literature have often concluded that there is much disarray, disorder, and disillusionment in both the study and the results of educational change.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to interrelate the vast and elusive literature on change, innovation, and knowledge utilization. There is a need, however, to begin to integrate bits and pieces of extant knowledge in order to force explicitness and organize observations about the change phenomenon. Put differently, the major sources of research, summaries, and compilations must be coherently interrelated in order to begin to identify the characteristics and relationships inherent in the change process, as well as provide a firmer basis for administrative action. As we synthesize major research, summaries, and compilations we must select from among the variables proposed. Thus, through considered delimitation of the research scope, the literature integration becomes focused enough to allow a systematic, comprehensive analysis.

This paper, therefore, will briefly examine six major reviews of the change literature. We will focus on the variable of participation, a concept which has recently been the subject of vigorous social policy discussion as well as mounting social science research (Dachler & Wilpert, 1978; Greenberg, 1975). In the first section the rationale for focusing on participation is established by

analyzing the reviewers' interpretations of the change-participation relationship. The second section discusses alternative explanations for the heterogeneity of the reviewers' conclusions in order to at least partially reconcile the contradictory research findings. The final section integrates the findings to identify emerging parameters of the change-participation relationship based on a systematic accumulation of research knowledge.

The Ambiguity of the Change-Participation Relationship

In management and change literature, more attention has been given to the hypothesized benefits of participation than to nearly any other element of leadership style. The proliferation of reports, polemics, and exhortations has made it difficult to disentangle the many issues discussed, or to determine exactly what evidence has contributed to the commonly held view that a participatory leadership style is essential to productive, innovative organizations. Table 1 summarizes the conclusions of six frequently cited, comprehensive reviews of the educational change literature regarding decisional participation (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977; Giacquinta, 1973; Gross, Giacquinta, & Bernstein, 1971; Havelock, 1969; Human Interaction Research Institute, 1976; Paul, 1977). As illustrated by the contents of the table, participative decision making is a frequently cited factor in the organizational change process, but the reviewers dis-

Table 1

Major Conclusions of Recent Reviewers of the Change Literature on the Relationship Between Subordinate Decisional Participation and the Change Process

Synthesizer	Major Conclusion
Havelock (1969)	Major emphasis has been placed on the role that participation of an individual in groups has on the tendency for individuals to adopt innovations. We have shown that individuals who participate in group decisions are more apt to accept them as their own. . . . The literature indicates that group participation—whether decision making or otherwise--makes an individual more open to influence. (pp. 5-27)
Gross, Giacquinta, and Bernstein (1971)	Our review of the literature reveals that the use of change agents and participation are generally believed to be stratetic variables with respect to the initiation of change proposals, and that it is assumed that a strategy of initiation involving a change agent and subordinate participation typically leads to the successful implementation of innovations. However, there is a paucity of research evidence to support either of these propositions. (p. 29)
Giacquinta (1973)	In spite of the great enthusiasm in the literature for strategies involving participation of subordinates (in decision making), there is no firm understanding of the effects of participation in the change process or of the efficacy in bringing about change of participation strategies as compared to strategies of imposition from the top. (p. 186)
Fullan and Pomfret (1975)	Participation in the innovative process by those who are expected to implement the new program is widely thought to be an effective strategy, and of paramount importance. Research in this area is inconclusive because the nature and different dimensions of participation have not been related to implementation outcomes. (p. 375)
Human Interaction Research Institute (1976)	Extensive participation by all persons concerned in the identification and solution of organizational problems is conducive to change. (p. 23)
Paul (1977)	Widespread participation of staff at the early stages of a change program will help to create commitment to and identification with a change effort. (p. 44)

agree about the current state of knowledge with respect to the change-participation relationship. While all six reviewers express the belief that participation is a key factor in change, three reviewers imply that the research evidence supports this belief and three suggest that the empirical data are inconclusive. According to Havelock (1969), "one of the most effective techniques to predispose receivers to accept an innovation is to involve the recipients in the diffusion-adoption process" (pp. 5-19). Paul (1977) indicates basic agreement with Havelock by asserting that widespread staff participation in a diffuse decision-making structure helps to "create commitment to and identification with a change effort" (p. 44). Moreover, this is one of the few generalizations which Paul believes to be firmly established in the change literature. The review by the Human Interaction Institute (1976) also emphasizes the importance of participation. In contrast, Giacquinta argues that while "our review of the literature reveals that the use of change agents and participation are generally believed to be strategic variables. . . and subordinate participation typically leads to successful implementation . . .there is a paucity of research evidence to support either of these propositions" (p. 29). As shown in Table 1, the interpretations of Gross et al. (1971), and Fullan and Pomfret (1977), echo the conclusions of Giacquinta (1973).

Such heterogeneity and contradiction within a field of inquiry may be interpreted as indicating only confusion, fragmentation, or an absence of meaning. On the other hand, they may be regarded as a natural result of viewing a complex and multidimensional phenomenon from different vantage points within an essentially unexplicated social order. When heterogeneity is seen as synonymous with confusion, the existence of divergence within a field of study warrants control or resolution (as exemplified by the works of Campbell & Fiske, 1959; and Garner, Hake, & Eriksen, 1956). Alternatively, the second view implies that if the reasons for theoretical divergence can be integrated into a conceptual framework, the beginning of a clearer process of understanding may result.

Explication of Reviewers' Conclusions

The seemingly contradictory perspectives on the function of subordinate participation in the change process reflected in Table 1 may result from the interaction of at least three related factors:

1. The literature bases reflect a diversity of disciplinary and paradigmatic approaches;

2. The reviewers' reference essentially nonoverlapping literature bases; and

3. The literature bases reflect a wide variation in methodological approach, but a paucity of empirically based research evidence.

After analyzing each of these possible explanations separately, we will discuss their implications within the framework of the reviewers' empirically based references.

Disciplinary Diversity

The heterogeneity of the reviewers' conclusions may simply reflect the diversity of the disciplines from which their literature bases are drawn. Each of the six literature bases considered here is comprised of at least six references whose authors, in considering participation, asked different questions, applied different rationales, and sought different solutions.

The authors' questions, rationales, and solutions are shaped by the paradigms inherent in their respective disciplines, which include psychology (e.g., Agnew & Hsu, 1960) and economics and sociology (e.g., French, Israel, & As, 1960; Morse & Reimer, 1956). Agnew and Hsu's (1960) report, for example, interprets the success of the participation phenomenon, described as "free-and-open discussion" (p. 196), in terms of the "American psychology of self-reliance": "coupled with this insistence on making their own decisions is the American distaste for authority, especially if they are situated at the receiving end of it" (p. 197). Staff participation in a series of discussions was viewed as resulting in reduced resistance to change because "it (the change) would no longer be seen as threatening to

their self-reliance and self-respect" (Agnew & Hsu, 1960, p. 197). This variation of a human growth and development paradigm, in which participation is viewed as a psychological treatment designed to maximize satisfaction of individuals' higher order needs, provides an interesting contrast to the productivity and efficiency paradigm represented in a number of the other references. Coch and French (1948), and Morse and Reimer (1956) provide examples of this orientation, in which people can be manipulated toward the goal of maximum organizational output by applying appropriate social technologies, including various forms of participation.

Each of these paradigms reflects a set of social-theoretical values, assumptions about people and organizations, and ends which participation is to serve. Specific contextual variables, such as organizational size or union membership, may constrain or facilitate the effect of participation in a given setting, and thus influence the degree to which participation can serve the intended system goals. Which paradigm is used to define "the problem" has critical implications for the potential success of a participatory arrangement and consequently for the interpretation of its efficacy as a change strategy. Therefore, the range and ambiguity of these reviewers' conclusions may be partly attributed to the variety of paradigms underlying their approaches to participation and the change process.

Nonoverlapping Literature Bases

Although an explication of theoretical assumptions offers reasons for the heterogeneity of the reviewers' conclusions, we still need to investigate the literature bases reviewed. Are the reviewers' conclusions based on different interpretations of the same literature, or do they reflect essentially discrete pools of literature?

A cross tabulation of the literature commonly referenced by the six reviewers is presented in Table 2. The horizontal dimension lists the reviewers by publication date; the vertical dimension lists the only four references cited in common by at least two reviewers.

As the table indicates, the reviews of Giacquinta (1973), Gross et al. (1971), and Havelock (1969) each cited at least one of several seminal participation studies: Coch and French (1948), Lewin (1947), or Morse and Reimer (1956). The other reviewers, Fullan and Pomfret (1977), the Human Interaction Research Institute (1976), and Paul (1977), each evidenced essentially discrete literature bases, with only one common reference among them (Miles, 1964). Although the restricted scope of the Fullan and Pomfret investigation (curriculum and instruction implementation) might account for the minimal reference overlap with its counterparts, no ready explanation comes to mind for the other reviews since the criteria for the selection or exclusion of references is not explicit. Given the wide variation among the reviewers' literature bases, divergence in their conclusions might be expected.

Table 2

A Cross Tabulation of Common References Cited by Six Major Reviewers of the Charge Literature

Citation	Havelock (1969)	Gross et al. (1971)	Giacquinta (1973)	Fullan & Pomfret (1975)	Human Interaction Research Institute (1976)	Paul (1977)
Coch & French (1948)	+	+	+	-	-	-
Lewin (1947)	+	-	+	-	-	-
Morse & Reimer (1956)	+	+	-	-	-	-
Miles (1964)	+	-	-	-	+	-

Note. + = reference cited by reviewer; - = reference not cited by reviewer.

Methodological Analysis

Table 2 established the essentially nonoverlapping nature of the six reviewers' literature bases. The following section outlines a broad methodological overview of the contents of these bases. This is followed by an in-depth comparison of selected empirical references in light of the conclusions of the reviewers.

In evaluating the potency of research for explicating structural and procedural properties of a given phenomenon, it is important to consider its methodological characteristics in regard to the study scope. Therefore, the methodological approaches of these reviewers' data bases have significance for our analysis.

Table 3 presents a numerical tabulation of the reviewers' references categorized according to a methodological strategy classification scheme based on Denzin (1970). Although many of these sources could be placed in more than one classification, they were categorized according to their primary strategy as perceived by the authors. The vertical dimension of the table lists the six reviewers by publication date. The horizontal dimension breaks down each reviewer's references, categorizing them by methodological strategy. These strategies are defined as follows:

1. Experiment--involves observations at two points in time, use of at least one control group, and randomization;

Table 3

Tabulation of Numbers of References in Reviewers' Literature Bases Categorized by Methodological Strategy

Reviewer	Strategy: Experiment	One-shot case study	Static group comparison	Field strategy	Opinion/ Synthesis	Totals by reviewer
Havelock (1969)	3	2	1	0	4	10
Gross et al. (1971)	1	2	0	1	6	10
Giacquinta (1973)	3	1	0	1	2	8
Fullan & Pomfret (1977)	0	2	0	1	2	7[a]
Human Interaction Research Institute (1976)	0	0	0	1	9	10
Paul (1977)	0	0	0	4	1	8[b]
Totals by strategy	7 (13%)	8 (15%)	1 (1%)	8 (15%)	25 (46%)	53[c] (90%)

[a]The total for the Fullan and Pomfret (1975) review reflects the inclusion of two unavailable unpublished dissertations.

[b]The total for the Paul (1977) review reflects the inclusion of three unavailable unpublished dissertations.

[c]This total reflects the inclusion of the five unavailable unpublished dissertations, and thus is the sum of the totals by reviewer column. Because these dissertations are not included in the strategy tabulations, the Totals by strategy column does not sum to 100%.

2. One-shot case study--involves observations which are collected by interview or self-administered questionnaire at one point in time;

3. Static group comparison--involves the addition of a control group to the one-shot case study;

4. Field strategy--involves any combination of document analysis, respondent interviewing, and direct participation or observation;

5. Opinion/synthesis--involves the articulation of a theoretical view and may integrate and interpret diverse conceptions and research findings to form a more coherent theory.

As noted in the table, the six reviewers collectively referenced 54 sources related to participation and change. Of these, nearly half (46%) are categorized as opinion/synthesis, whereas the experimental and case study classifications combined represent only approximately one quarter (28%) of the total reference base. It thus appears that both support and skepticism toward the involvement of subordinates in organizational decision making are based on a paucity of empirical evidence.

The references in the opinion/synthesis category, for example, discuss the stages in the innovative process (e.g., Berman & McLaughlin, 1976; Greiner, 1967; and Rogers, 1968), dimensions of change models (for example, Davis, 1973), and propositions related to the institutionalization of change (for example, Griffiths, 1964). They fail to present data supporting the researcher's hypotheses about the change-participation relationship. Put differently, the vigorous discussions and logical

arguments characteristic of the references in the opinion/synthesis category provide insufficient data for the identification of interrelationships among the defining dimensions of participation or a thorough understanding of the process governing the interaction of these dimensions. When reviewers ground their literature bases in these reports of logical argument and recordings of personal experience, or the findings of a few research studies, discrepant and ambiguous conclusions cannot be considered remarkable.

The references in the opinion/synthesis category offer little to the understanding of interorganizational processes as they relate to subordinate decisional participation, or to clarifying the fragmentation evidenced in the reviewers' analyses. It appears impractical to attempt to reconcile these opinions, models, and processes that have no common denominator, existing in multiple and uncoordinated forms. The following discussion, therefore, will focus on three experimental and case studies cited by the reviewers. These studies are illustrative of the methodological and theoretical parameters represented by the literature, and of the problems arising when we attempt to compare the conclusions of various literature reviews. Each of the selected references will be analyzed within a bi-dimensional framework which:

1. Clarifies the extent to which the study designs and findings permit valid generalizations and the derivation of sound administrative principles; and

2. Details problems central to the lack of theoretical coherence in the change-participation literature typified by these studies.

Among the earliest attempts to document a change-participation relationship was the research conducted by Lewin (1947) during World War II. His research reported a series of three experiments conducted to determine the effect of group decision on the adoption of new eating habits. In the experiments, group decision was contrasted with lecture and with individual instruction, with consideration given to mediating factors including the degree of participant involvement, participant motivation and expectations, and leader personality. The author stated that the "data thus far do not permit reliable quantitative, overall comparisons" (p. 206), but the results of the experiments pointed to the conclusion that certain methods of group decision proved to be superior to lecture and individual treatment as a means of changing social behavior.

Lewin's research findings are interpreted by Havelock (1969) as "overwhelming; housewives who were involved in a group discussion and group decision-making process about the importance of eating 'undesirable' food used it much more than those who heard a lecture on the same topic" (p. 5-2). Havelock's interpretation, however, is not supported by Giacquinta (1973) who maintains that "it is not possible to draw definite conclusions about the effects of participation on the basis of these studies, since the results can be explained away on method-

ological grounds" (p. 186). Giacquinta then goes on to cite a number of methodological limitations including unclear and possibly biased assignment of individuals to lecture and discussion groups, and research conclusions based on individuals' reports of their behavior rather than on actual observation.

In addition, the use of a volunteer population and the failure to control for several critical mediating variables brings the efficacy of the group decision method into further question. For example, the leader of the lecture groups was a woman who gave "hints of her own for preparing these delicious dishes" (p. 202), while a man, "without attempting any high pressure salesmanship" (p. 202), led the discussion groups in discussions of how "housewives like themselves. . .could overcome obstacles. . .such as the dislike of the husband (for the intestinal meats)" (p. 202). This difference in the sex of the group leader alone could affect interpretations of the positive study findings.

Havelock (1969, pp. 5-2) also cited the work of Pelz (1947) as research which contributes to the validity of a change-participation hypothesis. The Pelz experiment was designed to further analyze group discussion as utilized by Lewin (1947). Four factors were isolated for separate study: (a) group discussion as a means of conveying information; (b) decision to perform a specific action; (c) commitment as the degree to which the decision is indicated publicly; and (d) degree of consensus by the group in reaching the decision. The

experimental manipulations attempted to raise the willingness of three groups of university students in a beginning psychology class to volunteer as subjects in behavioral science experiments. Results showed that group discussion and public commitment were not essential in obtaining an action commitment, whereas the combination of making a decision and the degree of group consensus obtained were alone capable of generating differences as large as those reported in the classic Lewin studies.

Pelz's breakdown of the group discussion phenomena into four separate factors acknowledges the potential for qualitative variation in seemingly self-evident operations such as group discussion. However, the same study flattens its own definition of group discussion by equating the discussion and lecture materials, thus downplaying the richness of content a discussion presumably contributes: ". . .in the discussion groups, all possible expectations about participating in experiments were elicited and discussed. . .lectures covered the same topics" (p. 214). It is also questionable whether the negative finding regarding public commitment is viable since there would be little reason to expect a public commitment effect when the individuals are strangers to each other and therefore not interdependent.

Both the Lewin (1947) studies and Pelz's (1947) follow-up research were conducted in nonorganizational settings. They both exhibit methodological shortcomings which contribute to the viability of alternative interpretations of the final data, and obscure the change-participation

relationship. Of importance, however, is the nature of nonorganizational research, and its implications for extrapolating to organizational contexts.

The dynamics of participation imply interdependence among four defining dimensions (Dachler & Wilpert, 1978): (a) the social theory underlying participation (including the values, goals, and assumptions of the implementators); (b) the properties of participation (for example, formal or informal, direct or indirect); (c) the contextual boundaries of participation (for instance, the characteristics of society or of groups within the organization); and (d) the outcomes of participation for the individual, organization, and society. Although both Lewin's (1947) and Pelz's (1947) research tries to use participation in group discussions to bring about a desired change, the laboratory nature of the research divorces the study definition of participation from the more general social phenomenon. They fail to examine alternative ideological frameworks which could give meaning to the questions they ask about participation nor do they make explicit their choice of a framework with its accompanying definitions of context, values, assumptions, and goals. Thus, the Lewin and Pelz studies in nonorganizational settings do not integrate their findings with an ideology or social theory, thus making it difficult to draw conclusions about the effects of the participation phenomenon.

The disparity in the reviewers' conclusions about Lewin's and Pelz's nonorganizational research is also echoed in their summaries of the organizational studies. Their varying interpretations of the classic study on participation by Coch and French (1948) illustrates this disparity and the difficulty of reconciling their conclusions.

Coch and French's field study was conducted in a U.S. industrial firm to compare the reactions of workers who had differing opportunities to participate in discussions about their work procedures. Four groups of workers were transferred to a new job. Three of these groups actively participated in restructuring and planning the new job and the need for the transfer was made "dramatically clear," while the control group went through the usual factory change routine. The authors measured productivity rates and "acts of aggression" against management. Results of the experiment, interpreted through Lewin's force field theory, indicated that participation in the change process led to acceptance of management's goals of increased productivity and morale.

As mentioned above, the Coch and French research is cited by different reviewers in support of very different positions. Havelock (1969) for example, concludes a summary of the Coch and French research with the remark: "One conclusion that can be reached from these findings is that. . .group discussion about policy and involvement in decision-making facilitates change for individuals in a group" (pp. 5-5).

Yet Gross et al. (1971) cite the same study as an example of research which is "rife with methodological deficiencies" (p. 27), and from which conclusions about the relative effectiveness of participation strategies are more than a little premature.

Closer scrutiny of the Coch and French (1948) study indicates strong support for the skeptical position advocated by Gross et al. (1971). The improper use of statistical techniques and a lack of control for mediating variables such as training and goal-setting are examples of methodological problems that confound the interpretation of the research results. In addition, a number of other issues remain troublesome. Coch and French selected a company in an extremely deteriorated initial state. Of the employees whose jobs were changed, 62% previously had become chronically substandard or quit during relearning. A company whose experience with technical change was this poor may be so atypical that the generalizability of the findings is uncertain. The validity and generalizability of the positive results are also threatened by the possibility of Hawthorne effects; a nonexperimental group does not necessarily constitute an adequate control group. If, as in the Coch and French (1948) study, the control group is aware of its role or if there is interaction between the experimental and control groups, then parallel or contrast effects may be expected in the two groups.

The Coch and French research also provides examples of methodological dilemmas typical of the other research studies. For instance,

the lack of a clear operational definition of participation leads to confusion between participation as the opportunity to present suggestions, and actual influence on the decisions made (see also Agnew & Hsu, 1956; Morse & Reimer, 1956, for further examples of ambiguities in definition). Also, the failure to test critical assumptions underlying their argument makes the parameters of participatory effectiveness unclear. It was assumed but not demonstrated in the Coch and French (1948) research that members of the experimental groups, due to their participation, realized the need for change and therefore had a more positive attitude than members of the control group.

In contrast to the nonorganizational research, the Coch and French research clearly typifies a theoretical orientation to the participation phenomenon, specifically, the productivity and efficiency orientation. In their introduction to the study, the authors cite the marked aggression against management, high turnover, very low efficiency, and restriction of output as expressions of serious production problems and resistance to change in the Harwood factory. Workers' roles and factory goals are defined in terms of their efficiency ratings of X units per hour. The rationale for the use of participation is implicitly clear: participation should decrease employee dissatisfaction and thereby decrease the resulting cost to the organization of reduced efficiency and quality of production. Since the authors of all the research studies fail to make explicit the structural and operational properties, values, and goals defining their research setting, inter-

pretation of the results is difficult. Dachler and Wilpert (1978) define the unstated parameters in the Coch and French (1948) research to illustrate this very point:

> In the Coch and French study, the potential of participation was circumscribed by designating the main objectives for participation as "overcoming resistance to change" and eliminating all the undesirable consequences of employee resistance. Furthermore, the potential of that participatory arrangement was delineated by its particular properties (e.g., limited access to decisions, restricted decision content, formally imposed participatory system. . .) which were in line both with the underlying values and goals (e.g., increase employee productivity and attraction to the job. . .) and with the existing context (e.g., resistance to change viewed primarily as an employee problem, available labor force, competitive pressures) (pp. 20-21).

Dachler and Wilpert echo Moscovici's (1972) argument that a participatory system with very different properties and outcomes (and therefore with a different potential) could be constructed working from a total system point of view instead of "uncritically accepting a perspective that, on the surface, seems to fit reality as defined by some members (in this case, managers) of the existing system" (Dachler & Wilpert, 1978, p. 21). In other words, not only the participation phenomenon,

but also other properties of the setting in which it is applied affect the results. Thus, when the authors of research studies fail to delineate their values and assumptions identifying the meaning and potential of the change-participation relationship becomes arduous if not impossible.

Table 4 presents a summary of the methodological and theoretical parameters of seven of the cited research studies. None of this research presents an explicit theoretical framework within which to view the participation phenomenon, nor do they provide operational definitions of participation or change defining the involvement of employees or management. Three of these studies have been discussed in depth.

Summary and Implications

Our critique of selected change-participation literature began with an overview of several major reviewers' interpretations of the change-participation relationship. The heterogeneity of these reviewers' conclusions necessitated an in-depth analysis of their literature bases to investigate the sources of disagreement. This analysis revealed a diversity of disciplinary and ideological frameworks within and across essentially unique literature bases and methodological approaches, but a shortage of empirical data. We then discussed the way these limitations have restricted consistent conclusions about the relationship between participation and change.

Table 4

Summary Information of Methodological and

Theoretical Parameters of Selected Research Studies

Study	Definition of change	Definition of participation	Setting	Methodology	Explicit theoretical framework	Implicit theoretical framework	Documentation
Lewin (1947)	Changes in mothers' uses of certain types of foods.	As related to "group decision": presence at a group discussion about a particular action to be taken by members of the group as individuals with a request for public decision.	No organizational affiliation	Experiment	None	None	". . .discussion, if conducted correctly, is likely to lead to a much higher degree of involvement" (p. 202). ". . .minimized resistance to considering the problems and possibilities in an objective unprejudiced manner. . ." (p. 202). "One of the reasons why 'group carried changes' are more readily brought about seems to be the unwillingness of the individual to depart too far from group standards. . ." (p. 204).
Pelz (1947)	Volunteering for behavioral science experiments.	Involvement in group discussion ranging from at least being present at discussions, to anonymous statements of conviction, to public commitment with a record kept.	No organizational affiliation	Experiment	None	None	Improves commitment to action, i.e., raises the probability of future action.
Coch & French (1948)	Changes in job procedures involving pajama folding and pajama examining.	Participation through representation: representatives chosen by the group involved in approving management's plan and designing the job changes. Total participation: all group members involved in approving management's plan and designing the job change.	Industrial	Experiment	None	Productivity and Efficiency	"On the basis of the preliminary theory that resistance to change is a combination of an individual reaction to frustration with strong group-induced forces, it seemed that the most appropriate methods for overcoming the resistance to change would be group methods" (p. 520).
Lawrence & Smith (1955)	Participation and goal setting.	Presence at group discussion (during which participation was encouraged by direct questions, case studies, modified role playing, requests for suggestions).	Industrial	Experiment	None	Productivity and Efficiency	". . .permitting the group to set its own production goal led to greater increase in production than occurred in control group. . ." (p. 334).

Study	Definition of change	Definition of participation	Setting	Methodology	Explicit theoretical framework	Implicit theoretical framework	Documentation
[illegible] & Weiner (1960)	Degree of decisional participation.	Not specifically addressed other than: "In the autonomy program, the clerical work groups come to make group decisions about many of the things which affected them and which were important to them. The range of the decisions was very great, including work methods and processes, and personnel matters. Probably the most important area in which the clerks were not able to make decisions was the area of salary" (p. 122).	Industrial	Experiment	None	Productivity and Efficiency	"The results of several previous studies suggested that the individual's role in decision making might affect his satisfaction and productivity. . . . The logical next step seemed to be the contracted testing of hypotheses concerning the relationship between role in organization decision making and two aspects of organizational effectiveness: satisfaction and productivity" (p. 120).
French, Israel, & As (1960)	Changes involved in winter to summer production, such as allocation of articles to work groups and length of training.	"A process in which two or more parties influence each other in making certain plans, policies, and decisions" (p. 3). Psychological participation: "objectively observed amount of influence he has on jointly made decisions" (p. 4). Objective participation: "objectively observed amount of influence (as determined by the social scientist)" (p. 4).	Industrial	Experiment	None	Productivity and Efficiency	"One effect of a high degree of participation by workers in decisions concerning their own work will be to strengthen their motivation to carry out these decisions" (p. 5). It (participation) satisfies such important social needs as the need for recognition and appreciation and the need for independence. These satisfactions and in addition the improvement in their jobs that are introduced through participation lead to higher job satisfaction.
Agnew & Hsu (1960)	New patient clothing procedures.	Presence at a series of six staff conferences where "free-and-open discussion prevailed."	Medical	Social survey: one-shot case study	None	Human Growth and Development	"During the series of conferences, the personnel increasingly reduced its resistance to the proposed change because the individuals involved had gradually internalized, at least in part, the proposed change. As they come to feel they themselves had organized the change, they tended to go along with the change much more easily than before, for if the change came from themselves, it would no longer be seen as threatening to their self-reliance and self-respect" (p. 197).

This interpretation of seemingly disparate research conclusions has some important methodological and theoretical implications that may clarify the role of literature reviews in general and the change-participation reviews in particular. The positivistic methodological paradigm reflected in the literature reviewed here can be criticized for specific inadequacies in, for example, design and statistical analysis. As demonstrated, these inadequacies result in confusing findings of limited generalizability and usefulness. Equally distressing, however, are the more subtle implications of the positivistic methodological stance. Moscovici (1972), Cambell (Note 1), and others have described these problems, which center around preserving the status quo at the expense of questioning how the social environment (here, the organization) is actively created and changed by social units (the employees) that are a part of it (Benson, 1977; Moscovici, 1972). Once we are aware of the managerial perspective exhibited in the literature reviewed here, we can begin to explain the restricted nature of the research questions which have been asked. Dachler and Wilpert's (1978) analysis of the Coch and French (1948) research presented here, for example, pointed out that defining resistance to change as an employee "problem" rather than as a social process involving both employees and managers resulted in the omission of a whole range of questions. Consequently, our understanding of change and participation is that much less complete.

The fragmented results in the participation-change research reflect the strong constraints on the kinds of questions that have been asked, and the different ideological frameworks within which these questions have been posed. Even the relatively small number of studies reviewed here contain many definitions of participation and change, and illustrate the unquestioned values these terms may represent. The studies make it abundantly clear that participation and change are complex, and that research which fails to encompass this complexity cannot possibly reflect the questions that participatory arrangements pose in their real-world environment. It is therefore critical that researchers begin to question parameters of the change-participation relationship to determine how participation can best be adjusted to fit various individual, group, and organizational characteristics to achieve the values and goals suggested by their theoretical orientations. It is also necessary to examine how a phenomenon is broken down into its components and why certain components are selected for analytic research.

In summary, the analysis presented in this paper provides an example of the methodological and theoretical dilemmas inherent in a field of knowledge, and of the complex and interdependent issues arising when the research emphasis becomes one of "proof" or "denial" rather than integration of ideological positions into an overall social concept.

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1. Campbell, D. T. Qualitative knowing in action research. Kurt Lewin Award Address to the Society for the Psychological Study of School Issues, American Psychological Association Convention, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1974.

APPENDIX A

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